

Duxbury sailors win in Bermuda p.1

BY SANDY VON STACKELBERG
SPECIAL TO THE CLIPPER

The Marion to Bermuda sail race began on Friday, June 17 and has been termed a "grueling," "memorable," "exhilarating," "gnarly," "incredible" and "pure fun." It was so difficult that one fifth of the fleet retired early, but not our Duxbury boys, who came away with silver.

Both Duxbury skippered and crewed boats arrived on Wednesday. Dave Caso's "Silhouette" (Cherubini 44) finished first in Class D (out of 11) and 6th overall and sailed their individual second best time. Shawn Dahlen's "Attitude" (42' Beneteau) came in 5th in Class C (out of 13) and 16th overall, out of nearly 50 boats at the start and was also their best individual time. Interestingly, Dahlen would have been fourth if he had been just 8 minutes faster after corrected time over the entire roughly 110 hour race. By the way, the boat that won the race, "Lilla," broke the previous record by three hours.

The start was exciting with heavy 30 knot SSW winds and a squall. Silhouette had a great start and was third out of Buzzard's Bay. Attitude went on one long beat to Quissett and then tacked to port to fetch Sow and Pigs Reef off Cuttyhunk on their approximate rhumb line (shortest distance) course of 164° to Bermuda. Both boats' navigators felt it would be initially wiser to stay to the West of the rhumb line because of the forecasted wind and currents, if they could. Both paid weather services were advising that route.

Silhouette basically stayed to the east for the first 300 miles

and then tracked the rhumb line thereafter, only tacking once. Attitude, on the other hand, could point a bit higher (Silhouette was designed for reaching) and stayed west of the rhumb line for the first 150 miles then hugged the rhumb line for the rest of the race. This was not like last year's Newport to Bermuda, where the racers were searching for the elusive Gulf Stream eddies to help them.

Saturday, the winds diminished and most boats were only making 3 knots for nearly 18 hours. Attitude went on a port tack after the winds switched to the NE. The temperature of the water at the start was a cold 50 degrees in Buzzard's Bay and later when the boats crossed into the Gulf Stream, the water surged up to 80 de-

grees. When they crossed that divide, seas were only 10-12 feet, but the winds started building again to 30-35 knots with clouds and rain about 130 miles from Bermuda. It was a wet race during the final day with waves and swells of 20-25 feet, (it was also wet below deck). During this final stretch the boats were doing 8-9 knots over the ground due to the high winds.

The roughness of the water and strong winds forced a triple reef in the main (reducing area of the sail) for nearly one full day out of the five for Attitude. Some of the crew of one of the boats became seasick; it happens, even with experienced crew in brutal weather. Then there were times when they were becalmed, hours of hearing the slap and clank, driving

the sailors to distraction.

There were breakdowns: Attitude lost the leach line on their 140 jib, temporarily replacing it with the 155 jib. The crew then fixed the damaged jib by hand sewing (in high seas on deck.), and using sail tape to complete the repair. Soon thereafter the autopilot broke, of course at night, and it was a two-man operation to replace the snap-ring and washer that vibrated loose from the actuator arm where it is attached to the steering quadrant, forcing the helmsman to steer the old fashion way, manually, during the repair.

On the Silhouette after 400 miles, the spinnaker had a 15' tear; however with typical Yankee ingenuity they duct taped both sides of the sail and that



The whole group from Duxbury supporting Silhouette: Sam Lawson, Woody Lawson, Sarah Caso, Bill Caso, Deb Caso, Dave Caso, Ames Lyman, Terry Watson, Cassy Lawson, Ned Lawson, Nancy Pratt, Keith Pratt and Jesse Caso in front holding the trophy. Missing from photo, Chuck Leonard and Janet Lawson.

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continued from page one

held for the remainder of the trip! Further inconveniences aboard, the battery didn't have enough juice to start the motor at the end of the race (don't you just want to get in) and the bow thruster didn't work while docking (hey, a connection came loose in those heavy seas).

For Silhouette the final indignity was finishing at 0300 in the dark and having to wait for 3-4 hours for passage through the narrow channel to Hamilton as two cruise ships and a frigate exited. For the Bermudians it must have been a pleasure to see the waiting dozen sail boats going through the channel early that morning.

This race, Attitude had four sailors as crew: their Captain Shawn Dahlen, Mark Bobseine, Keith Fotta and Andre Martecchini. On Silhouette, the crew was composed of the Captain Dave Caso, Ned Lawson, Sam Lawson (who has raced to Bermuda 12 times), Chuck Leonard, Keith Pratt and Terry Watson.

Andre Martecchini said "this was a grueling and rock 'n roll race." Keith Pratt noted that he was proud that on his watch, with a reef in, Silhouette set its own speed record of 14 knots. Keith Fotta thought with the initial and final strong winds, "This is the kind of race I like."

Chuck Leonard said "I've been through some off shore thunderstorms before, but this one ... was impressive. Lightning all around, and it came on



Silhouette is the dark hulled ketch in the center of the picture.



Shawn Dahlen and Dave Caso at the Awards ceremony.

so fast. It rained so hard that I couldn't see the three guys crouched in the companionway, three feet in front of me, while I was at the helm. All I could see was the instruments at 8-10 inches away. The crew encouraging me along, as I kept Silhouette at 25-30 degrees off the 30-35 knot breezes until the wind and rain finally subsided. I believe we had a double reef in the main and the jib furled halfway in.

Slept well after that shift!"

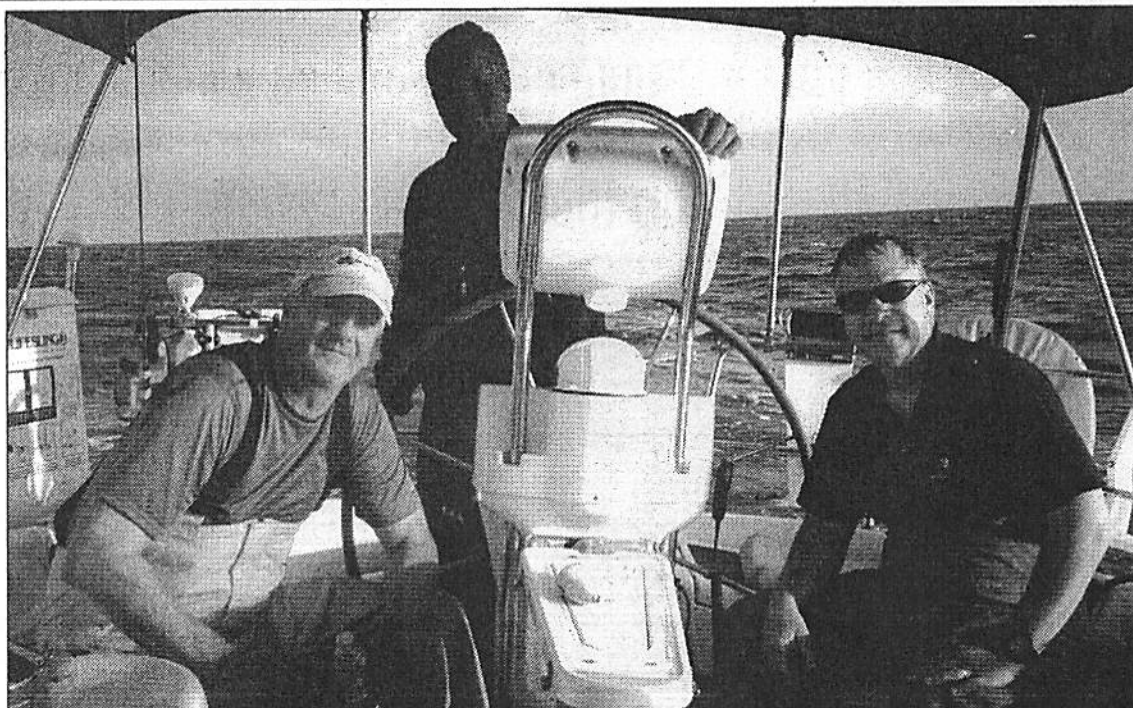
The crews saw a pod of about 100 porpoises, many jumping (sometimes rolling over to look up at the crew), flying fish leaping on deck, a school of tuna bounding out of the water (looking like flying footballs), along with many petrels and Portuguese men-of-war.

During the race, the crew counted on their experience and knowledge of off-shore sailing to get them through the many challenges of off-shore racing, but most important to them was their shared camaraderie and experiences, the lessons learned and tales of that race. Once the crews arrived, most took a well-deserved vacation with their loved ones on the beautiful isle of Bermuda.

If you have sailing news about Duxbury residents send them to Sandy von Stackelberg at svonstacksail@yahoo.com and he will write them up and submit an article to the Clipper. Remember always include pictures.



Mark Bobseine at the helm of Attitude.



Mark Bobseine, Shawn Dahlen and Keith Fotta aboard Attitude.